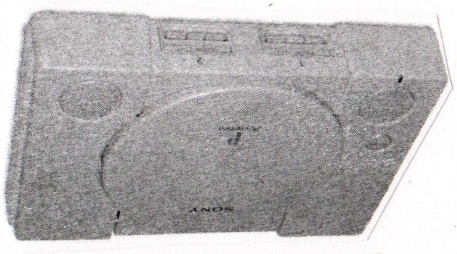
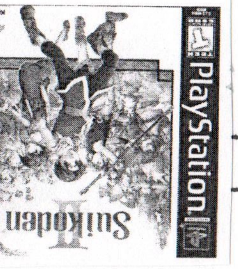
LOST GEMS
OF THE
PLAYSTATION:

A REPORT.



(Is your PS1 wearing out? Try this!)

So this one never came out here. **Suzuki Bakuhatsu** is about Suzuki – whose day involves encountering one bomb after another in such incongruous places as an orange, a light fixture, a gun, the ocean, and the moon itself, all of which she has to systematically defuse. Batshit insane in the best way.



For my money, **Suikoden II** is better than Final Fantasy 7 (which aged terribly) and 8 (which was nonsensical to start with). It has an epic story, a genuinely unhinged villain whose eventual takedown is an unforgettable sequence, and some amazing characters – Viktor, Hai Yo, and the previous game's protagonist all jump to mind. Lots of great sidequests and gameplay changes too – it really keeps you engaged by changing things up constantly.

Rival Schools United by Fate might be one of the best titles ever, honestly. I love its cheesy earnestness. The game rolls with the cheese, too, telling a story of attempted conquest via brainwashing of high school students, which seems like it was poorly thought out. Still, it's a fun fighter from Capcom, back when they were taking chances on new ideas. And the gameplay really does hold up.

This is a genuinely stupid and repetitive game. And yet… It is just plain fun to stomp through city after city wrecking everything you see, eating the people shooting you, and swatting choppers out of the sky. And, of course, taking shots at your friends is always good for a giggle.

This is a fun distillation of the CPS-2 era Capcom fighting games, full of fun references and Easter eggs. **Pocket Fighter** draws from Street Fighter, Darkstalkers and Warzard for its chibi characters, whose moves power up with gems you beat out of opponents and who make referential costume changes multiple times within the same combo. The stages are full of their friends hanging out as well.

Bushido Blade is an early game, and perhaps a little better known than the others listed here, but it's still a truly unique and fun experience, despite its nasty load times. It's a fighter, but one without life bars, super meters, or anything of that sort – one good hit will disable you (rendering a limb useless for the rest of the game) or killing you outright.

Another Japan-only game. **Harmful Park** is a side-scrolling shooter in the vein of a Parodius – full of silly, random setpieces (A whale! A carnival! Lemuel Gulliver! A wedding drama!) Plus, all the weapons are food-themed, so if you want to be able to lob killer pies at enemies from your ship, then go nuts.

Thomas Vose trvose@hotmail.com

SHARP
CC-BY-NC
5/11/24